



Over the last few months, we have seen one opinion survey after another showing that Congress is facing record low approval ratings, hovering around 12 percent.

Underpinning America's disapproval and frustration with Washington is a broken political system, ranging from anachronistic Senate procedure to the recent Citizens United ruling. The budget battles of this Congress extend and amplify this trend.

While there is no silver bullet to "fix" what's ailing our Government, many experts and the public agree that we need comprehensive redistricting reform. Under the current system, redrawing Congressional district boundaries every ten years sends Congress down the path to partisan gridlock and away from thoughtful change.

Even though elections are just around the corner, only 22 states have approved final district maps, leaving voters uncertain about whom their candidate will be and furthering incumbent advantage.

It's the worst kept secret in Washington that our current redistricting process too often gives incumbent politicians more influence over picking their voters, than voters have in picking their politicians. Both political parties have developed the redistricting process into an art form, punishing opponents and protecting incumbents.

Politicians should not be allowed to achieve through the redistricting process what they can't

accomplish at the ballot box. To make Congress more representative, all districts in all states should follow balanced criteria and metrics instead of the corrupt system we have today.

### Solution

To address this problem, [I have introduced H.R. 3846, the National Commission for Independent Redistricting Act of 2012](#), which would establish a national Commission after each Census, beginning in 2020, that would ensure Congressional elections are more competitive and fair, and that voters get to choose their representatives, not the other way around.

The Commission would be composed of respected leaders with a proven commitment to public service and strengthening our future, such as ex-Presidents, retired Federal justices, previous congressional leaders, and electoral experts from academia. The Commission would oversee an independent, professional agency, tasked with establishing uniform criteria and congressional district lines for each State that respects the communities of interest, and geographic, ethnic, cultural, and historic boundaries, rather than just partisan affiliation.

The Commission would also inject greater transparency and accountability into the process by requiring robust public consultation and commentary that must be taken into account, and a website where all maps, hearings, votes with concurring and dissenting opinions, and materials would be made public in a timely fashion.

Congress would then approve or disapprove of the proposal put forward by the Commission with a simple up-or-down vote, free from procedural gridlock.

Meaningful political reform is seldom easy and it takes time. Congress should enact this legislation now, well before the next census in 2020. With six elections and nearly a decade standing between current politicians and the next Census, now is the time to reform the redistricting process and act in a way that reflects broad public interests, rather than narrow and immediate partisanship.

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